

LOSS CONTROL TOPIC

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Driver distraction is a leading cause of automobile accidents in the United States. It is estimated that between 4,000 and 8,000 accidents caused by distracted driving occur each day – well over half of all auto accidents annually at a cost of over \$40 Billion.

We tend not to take the dangers inherent in driving seriously because it is a task performed so frequently. It is quite easy to take a casual attitude toward it.



Everyone engages in some form of distracted driving. Aside from the more publicized distractions of cell phones and text messaging, adjusting the radio or the rear view mirror also causes momentary inattention.

It does not require a lot of time for a distraction to cause trouble. Studies indicate that the average driver has to make over 200 observations for every mile traveled and with a vehicle covering over 100 feet per second at 60 miles per hour, full attention to driving is critical.

Physical distractions take your eyes off of the road or your hands from the wheel. Mental distractions take your mind off of the task at hand.

Hands free devices, while better than manually manipulated ones, are still mentally distracting. If you combine a physical and mental task, such as changing a CD or searching for a radio station, you double the inattention time.

SOME GOOD RULES

- Don't multi-task. You are behind the wheel of a ton and a half of steel that can cause incredible injuries. Keep driving the only task at hand
- Pre-set everything. Adjust the seat, seat belts, radio, CD, rear view mirrors, climate controls, navigation devices, etc. before you drive away
- Don't eat and drive. Stop and enjoy it. If you must eat while driving, avoid messy foods
- Find a safe area to pull over before using a cell phone or texting device. Hands free devices still cause mental distractions
- Make sure that younger passengers are secured with safety belts or child restraints and avoid trying to attend to them while driving. Pull over to a safe place to do so

Keeping your full attention on the road is one of the smartest ways to avoid accidents and enjoy the privilege of driving.

Source Materials

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety www.iihs.org

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration www.nhtsa.dot.gov

National Safety Council www.nsc.org

These guidelines are intended to offer general suggestions for follow up and discussion and should not be considered a substitution for professional advice. .

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